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## THE TIES THAT BIND: A SHARED NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

by Michael Grosso

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### New Evidence of Life After Death

Most of us are struggling to survive on earth and don't have time to think about life after death. As it happens, there is much information about this subject, and some progress in the field is notable. Thanks to new technologies, what may lie behind the veil of bodily death is being gradually scoped out.

There are four types of experience fairly recently noted that seem to shed light on the great mystery: near-death experiences (NDEs), deathbed visions, terminal lucidity, and group near-death experiences. For a review of the whole range of afterlife evidence, see my "Experiencing the Next World Now" on Amazon.

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The most widely known are NDEs, perhaps the most interesting. In cases of near-death caused by cardiac arrest, blood is immediately cut off from the brain, and there ought not to be any consciousness, any experience at all, according to the mainstream view. But not only do people still have experiences, they have the most vivid, super-real, and transformative experiences—which should be impossible, if mainstream science is right.

In death-bed visions, people about to die see apparitions of dead people; their mood is exalted. They die convinced by their vision that there is a world beyond. Terminal lucidity refers to people who suffer from Alzheimer's, schizophrenia, or other brain disease, but who, days or hours before death, suddenly recover their mental faculties and recognize their loved ones just before passing away. This phenomenon is a real challenge--how to explain it? It looks as if the person, in leaving the sick brain, retrieves her mental faculties before passing into the next world. The retrieved mental faculties may be the result of the mind breaking loose from its damaged brain. I'm waiting to hear another explanation.

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Finally, the fourth new phenomenon, and one that seems especially rare: in this case, individuals with the dying person somehow mentally join him or her in the preliminary journey

to the next world. Scott M. Taylor, Ed.D, President and Executive Director of the Monroe Institute, was kind enough to provide a written account of the near-death experience he shared with someone he loved.

Before I quote Scott's description, there is the sad background for this remarkable experience. Mary Fran and her boy Nolan were both killed in a car crash, Mary Fran instantly and Nolan several days later in a hospital, surrounded by two anxious families, along with Scott. There came a moment when the boy died, causing the hearts of all to sink—except Scott.

At the moment of Nolan's passing, Scott had an experience that is rarely reported, although Raymond Moody has written a book about the phenomenon called "Glimpses of Eternity." How many times in the history of the world have people been forced to watch those they loved die? Countless, no doubt—but how often do you hear stories of anyone who claimed to join the dying person making the transition?

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Not very often, to be sure. But it's being reported more frequently today. Here is how Scott Taylor describes it: "As Nolan's heartbeat patterns flattened and the monitor beside his bed sounded the constant, unwavering tone of organ failure, every member of his extended family wept ... except for me.

"As he left his physical body for the last time, Mary Fran crossed the divide between the nonphysical world and the physical and scooped Nolan out of his body. Their reunion embrace was exquisite. Then, to my surprise, Mary Fran and Nolan turned and included me in their embrace. Together, the three of us went to the light.

"I know of no English words for the combination of joy, ecstasy, love, and requited longing that burned within me. It carried me to a dimension I never knew existed. In that moment, there was no pain of loss, only unity, rapture and reunion."

"I was fully conscious, fully present in the hospital room with the grieving gathering. Yet simultaneously I was lifted to a place beyond description. ..."

Now, as it seems, the greater mental world we inhabit—not in physical space or time—is present to us and pervades physical reality. We are, it seems, psychophysical amphibians, separate in space but united in mind and spirit. The great oneness of mind is mostly hidden below the threshold of our everyday awareness.

The experience that Scott describes fits the amphibian image. He describes his experience unfolding in the 'next' world even while at the same time being fully aware of himself with his

co-mourners standing next to him in the hospital. Scott was aware of the incongruity of his feeling expansive and ecstatic at the very moment that Nolan died, so he puts his face in his hands and tries to conceal the fact that he is bursting with joy.

As Scott writes in a remarkable passage: "I was fully conscious, fully present in the hospital room with the grieving gathering. Yet simultaneously I was lifted to a place beyond description. I experienced bi-location: two fully conscious vantage points, one on the window sill next to Willy, and a second, somewhere in another dimension embraced by Mary Fran and Nolan as she guided her son farther into the Light."

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The image that emerges tells us that by virtue of our minds we are connected with a greater mind and greater worlds. But to know this we sometimes are forced to venture into the dangerous waters of love and death.